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Metamora

COURT HOUSE

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THIS IS YOUR PARK

PRESERVE ITS NATURAL BEAUTY

Metamora Court House

Not alone because of its excellent Southern Colonial architecture and honest construction from native materials, but also for its rich historical background is Metamora Court House, in Woodford County, a valuable adjunct to the State System of Parks and Memorials.

The building, dating from 1845, retains the aura of the hearty days of the Forties and Fifties when lawyers in itinerant groups traveled in "rigs" from one county seat to another, met their clients on the sunny side of the Court House, under a tree, or in the street, and gathered convivially at night in village inns and taverns.

On the old Eighth Circuit of which Woodford County was a part, one of the most popular of these circuit-riding lawyers was Abraham Lincoln, of Springfield. Connections he formed during these years, particularly his friendship with Judge David Davis, were of great value to Lincoln in his political career. It was Judge Davis, later to become a Supreme Court Justice, who was responsible to a large extent for Lincoln's nomination by the Republican national convention in Chicago in 1860.

The Court House, completed two years after the county seat was moved to Metamora from Versailles, was constructed of bricks burned in local kilns and hardwood timbers hewn from logs cut near the village. Metamora, called Hanover until it was discovered that there was another village by the same name

in Illinois, remained the seat of government until 1897 when the county capital was moved to Eureka. The building is substantially the same today as it was then, a 40 by 50 foot structure with a corridor, lined with offices, running through the middle. In 1870, the stairway was moved from the back to the front of the building and in 1884 wings were added, but no other changes have been made.

The Court House was presented to the State as a memorial in 1921. The old Eighth Circuit courtroom is on the second floor. On the first floor is a museum housing a collection of pioneer relics donated by residents of Woodford County.

Before the Civil War, Lincoln, Stephen A. Douglas, Robert G. Ingersoll, and Adlai Stevenson, later to become Vice-President of the United States, tried cases in this courtroom. Among the famous jurists who presided here, besides Judge Davis, were Norman H. Purple and Samuel Treat.

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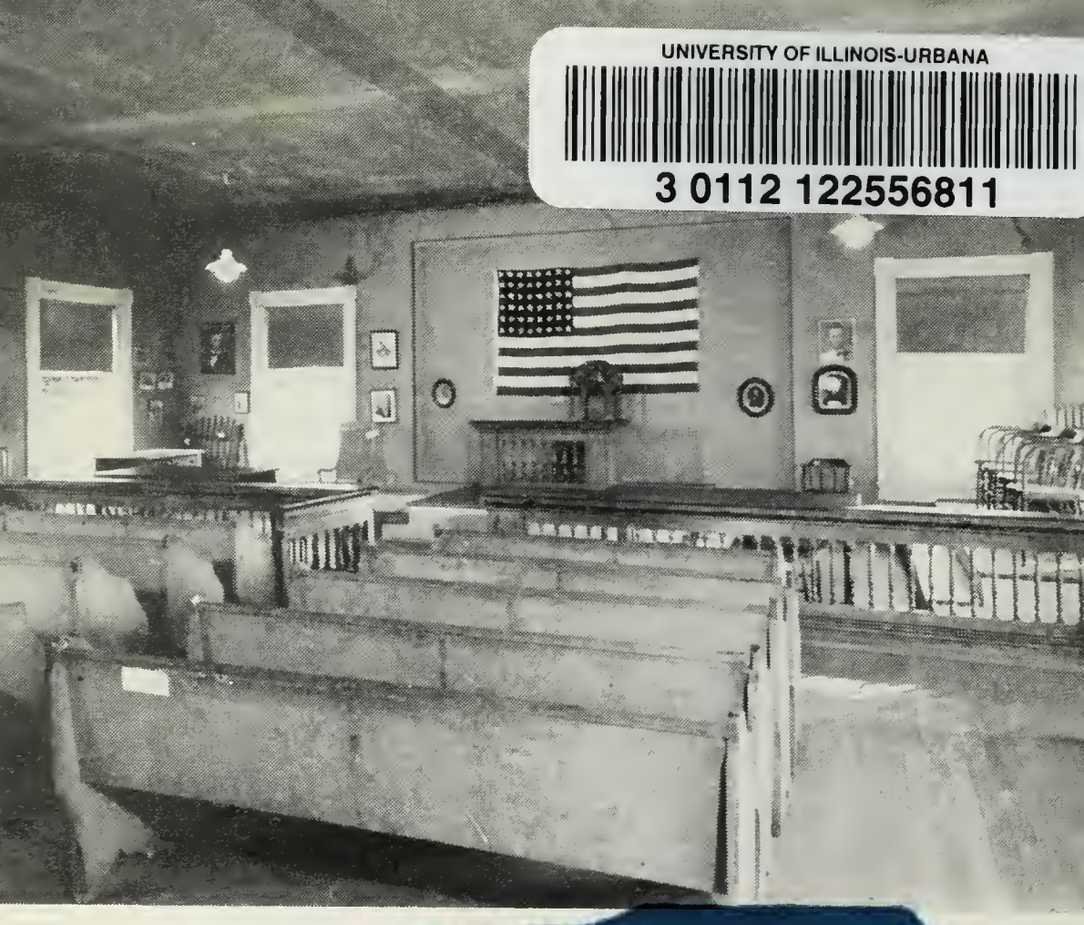

● Interior of Court Room

Write to the Department of Public Works and Buildings, Division of Parks and Memorials, State Capitol, Springfield, for further information concerning Illinois Parks and Memorials.

Forty-two State parks, 25 of historic interest, are of easy access from every part of the State. Lodges and cabins are an important feature of Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City State Parks. Reservations should be made with lodge managers.

Issued by
Department of Public Works and Buildings
DIVISION OF PARKS

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